

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

Case No.: 3:16-cv-00416-BEN-JLB

REYNALDO MESTRE
AW-2969,

Plaintiff,

v.

OFFICER KRUMREI; OFFICER
HARRISON; OFFICER ARREOLA;
OFFICER HANSEL; OFFICER JONES;
CITY OF SAN DIEGO POLICE DEP'T,

Defendants.

ORDER:

**1) GRANTING PLAINTIFF'S
MOTION TO PROCEED *IN FORMA
PAUPERIS* PURSUANT TO 28 U.S.C.
§ 1915(a) (ECF No. 2)**

AND

**2) DIRECTING U.S. MARSHAL TO
EFFECT SERVICE OF SUMMONS
AND COMPLAINT PURSUANT TO
28 U.S.C. § 1915(d)
AND Fed. R. Civ. P. 4(c)(3)**

Reynaldo Mestre ("Plaintiff"), currently incarcerated at Chuckawalla Valley State Prison located in Blythe, California, and proceeding pro se, has filed a civil rights complaint ("Compl.") pursuant to 42 U.S.C. § 1983 (ECF No. 1).

Plaintiff did not prepay the civil filing fee required by 28 U.S.C. § 1914(a); instead, he has filed a Motion to Proceed In Forma Pauperis ("IFP") pursuant to 28 U.S.C. §

1 1915(a). (ECF No. 2).

2 **II. Plaintiff's Motion to Proceed IFP**

3 All parties instituting any civil action, suit or proceeding in a district court of the
 4 United States, except an application for writ of habeas corpus, must pay a filing fee of
 5 \$400. *See* 28 U.S.C. § 1914(a).¹ An action may proceed despite a plaintiff's failure to
 6 prepay the entire fee only if he is granted leave to proceed IFP pursuant to 28 U.S.C. §
 7 1915(a). *See Andrews v. Cervantes*, 493 F.3d 1047, 1051 (9th Cir. 2007); *Rodriguez v.*
 8 *Cook*, 169 F.3d 1176, 1177 (9th Cir. 1999). However, if a prisoner, like Plaintiff, is granted
 9 leave to proceed IFP, he remains obligated to pay the entire fee in "increments," *see*
 10 *Williams v. Paramo*, 775 F.3d 1182, 1185 (9th Cir. 2015), regardless of whether his action
 11 is ultimately dismissed. *See* 28 U.S.C. § 1915(b)(1) & (2); *Taylor v. Delatoore*, 281 F.3d
 12 844, 847 (9th Cir. 2002).

13 Under 28 U.S.C. § 1915, as amended by the Prison Litigation Reform Act ("PLRA"),
 14 a prisoner seeking leave to proceed IFP must submit a "certified copy of the trust fund
 15 account statement (or institutional equivalent) for the prisoner for the six-month period
 16 immediately preceding the filing of the complaint." 28 U.S.C. § 1915(a)(2); *Andrews v.*
 17 *King*, 398 F.3d 1113, 1119 (9th Cir. 2005). From the certified trust account statement, the
 18 Court assesses an initial payment of 20% of (a) the average monthly deposits in the account
 19 for the past six months, or (b) the average monthly balance in the account for the past six
 20 months, whichever is greater, unless the prisoner has no assets. *See* 28 U.S.C. § 1915(b)(1);
 21 28 U.S.C. § 1915(b)(4). The institution having custody of the prisoner then collects
 22 subsequent payments, assessed at 20% of the preceding month's income, in any month in
 23 which the prisoner's account exceeds \$10, and forwards those payments to the Court until
 24

25 ¹ In addition to the \$350 statutory fee, all parties filing civil actions on or after May 1, 2013, must pay an
 26 additional administrative fee of \$50. *See* 28 U.S.C. § 1914(a) (Judicial Conference Schedule of Fees,
 27 District Court Misc. Fee Schedule) (eff. May 1, 2013). However, the additional \$50 administrative fee
 is waived if the plaintiff is granted leave to proceed IFP. *Id.*

1 the entire filing fee is paid. *See* 28 U.S.C. § 1915(b)(2).

2 In support of his IFP Motion, Plaintiff has submitted a certified copy of his trust
3 account statement pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1915(a)(2) and S.D. Cal. CivLR 3.2. *Andrews*,
4 398 F.3d at 1119. The Court has reviewed Plaintiff's trust account statement and it shows
5 that he has a current available balance of zero.

6 Therefore, the Court **GRANTS** Plaintiff's Motion to Proceed IFP and assesses no
7 initial partial filing fee per 28 U.S.C. § 1915(b)(1). *See* 28 U.S.C. § 1915(b)(4) (providing
8 that "[i]n no event shall a prisoner be prohibited from bringing a civil action or appealing
9 a civil action or criminal judgment for the reason that the prisoner has no assets and no
10 means by which to pay the initial partial filing fee."); *Taylor*, 281 F.3d at 850 (finding that
11 28 U.S.C. § 1915(b)(4) acts as a "safety-valve" preventing dismissal of a prisoner's IFP
12 case based solely on a "failure to pay . . . due to the lack of funds available to him when
13 payment is ordered."). However, the entire \$350 balance of the filing fees mandated will
14 be collected by the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation ("CDCR")
15 and forwarded to the Clerk of the Court pursuant to the installment payment provisions set
16 forth in 28 U.S.C. § 1915(b)(1).

17 **III. Initial Screening pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1915(e)(2) and § 1915A**

18 Notwithstanding Plaintiff's IFP status or the payment of any partial filing fees, the
19 PLRA also obligates the Court to review complaints filed by all persons proceeding IFP
20 and by those, like Plaintiff, who are "incarcerated or detained in any facility [and] accused
21 of, sentenced for, or adjudicated delinquent for, violations of criminal law or the terms or
22 conditions of parole, probation, pretrial release, or diversionary program," "as soon as
23 practicable after docketing." *See* 28 U.S.C. §§ 1915(e)(2) and 1915A(b). Under these
24 statutes, the Court must sua sponte dismiss complaints, or any portions thereof, which are
25 frivolous, malicious, fail to state a claim, or which seek damages from defendants who are
26 immune. *See* 28 U.S.C. §§ 1915(e)(2)(B) and 1915A(b); *Lopez v. Smith*, 203 F.3d 1122,
27 1126-27 (9th Cir. 2000) (en banc) (§ 1915(e)(2)); *Rhodes v. Robinson*, 621 F.3d 1002, 1004

1 (9th Cir. 2010) (discussing 28 U.S.C. § 1915A(b)).

2 All complaints must contain “a short and plain statement of the claim showing that
3 the pleader is entitled to relief.” Fed. R. Civ. P. 8(a)(2). Detailed factual allegations are
4 not required, but “[t]hreadbare recitals of the elements of a cause of action, supported by
5 mere conclusory statements, do not suffice.” *Ashcroft v. Iqbal*, 556 U.S. 662, 678 (2009)
6 (citing *Bell Atlantic Corp. v. Twombly*, 550 U.S. 544, 555 (2007)). “Determining whether
7 a complaint states a plausible claim for relief [is] . . . a context-specific task that requires
8 the reviewing court to draw on its judicial experience and common sense.” *Id.* The “mere
9 possibility of misconduct” falls short of meeting this plausibility standard. *Id.*; *see also*
10 *Moss v. U.S. Secret Service*, 572 F.3d 962, 969 (9th Cir. 2009).

11 “When there are well-pleaded factual allegations, a court should assume their
12 veracity, and then determine whether they plausibly give rise to an entitlement to relief.”
13 *Iqbal*, 556 U.S. at 679; *see also Resnick v. Hayes*, 213 F.3d 443, 447 (9th Cir. 2000)
14 (“[W]hen determining whether a complaint states a claim, a court must accept as true all
15 allegations of material fact and must construe those facts in the light most favorable to
16 the plaintiff.”); *Barren v. Harrington*, 152 F.3d 1193, 1194 (9th Cir. 1998) (noting that §
17 1915(e)(2) “parallels the language of Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 12(b)(6)”).

18 However, while the court “ha[s] an obligation where the petitioner is pro se,
19 particularly in civil rights cases, to construe the pleadings liberally and to afford the
20 petitioner the benefit of any doubt,” *Hebbe v. Pliler*, 627 F.3d 338, 342 & n.7 (9th Cir.
21 2010) (citing *Bretz v. Kelman*, 773 F.2d 1026, 1027 n.1 (9th Cir. 1985)), it may not “supply
22 essential elements of claims that were not initially pled.” *Ivey v. Bd. of Regents of the Univ.*
23 *of Alaska*, 673 F.2d 266, 268 (9th Cir. 1982).

24 As currently pleaded, the Court finds allegations in Plaintiff’s Complaint which are
25 sufficient to survive the sua sponte screening required by 28 U.S.C. §§ 1915(e)(2) and
26 1915A(b). Accordingly, the Court will direct the U.S. Marshal to effect service on
27 Plaintiff’s behalf. *See* 28 U.S.C. § 1915(d) (“The officers of the court shall issue and serve

all process, and perform all duties in [IFP] cases.”); Fed. R. Civ. P. 4(c)(3) (“[T]he court may order that service be made by a United States marshal or deputy marshal . . . if the plaintiff is authorized to proceed *in forma pauperis* under 28 U.S.C. § 1915.”).

III. Conclusion and Order

Good cause appearing, **IT IS HEREBY ORDERED** that:

1. Plaintiff’s Motion to Proceed IFP pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1915(a) is **GRANTED**.

2. The Secretary of the CDCR, or his designee, shall collect from Plaintiff’s prison trust account the \$350 filing fee owed in this case by collecting monthly payments from the account in an amount equal to twenty percent (20%) of the preceding month’s income and forward payments to the Clerk of the Court each time the amount in the account exceeds \$10 in accordance with 28 U.S.C. § 1915(b)(2). **ALL PAYMENTS SHALL BE CLEARLY IDENTIFIED BY THE NAME AND NUMBER ASSIGNED TO THIS ACTION.**

3. The Clerk of the Court is directed to serve a copy of this Order on Scott Kernan, Secretary, California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, P.O. Box 942883, Sacramento, California, 94283-0001.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that:


4. The Clerk is **DIRECTED** to issue a summons as to Plaintiff’s Complaint (ECF No. 1) upon Defendants and forward it to Plaintiff along with blank U.S. Marshal Form 285s for each named Defendant. In addition, the Clerk is directed to provide Plaintiff with a certified copy of this Order and a certified copy of his Complaint (ECF No. 1) and the summons so that he may serve each named Defendant. Upon receipt of this “IFP Package,” Plaintiff is directed to complete the Form 285s as completely and accurately as possible, and to return them to the U.S. Marshal according to the instructions provided by the Clerk in the letter accompanying his IFP package.

1 5. Upon receipt, the U.S. Marshal is **ORDERED** to serve a copy of the
2 Complaint and summons upon the named Defendants as directed by Plaintiff on the USM
3 Form 285s. All costs of service will be advanced by the United States. *See* 28 U.S.C.
4 § 1915(d); Fed. R. Civ. P. 4(c)(3).

5 6. Defendants are thereafter **ORDERED** to respond to Plaintiff's Complaint
6 within the time provided by the applicable provisions of Federal Rule of Civil Procedure
7 12(a); *see* 42 U.S.C. § 1997e(g)(2) (while a defendant may occasionally be permitted to
8 "waive the right to reply to any action brought by a prisoner confined in any jail, prison, or
9 other correctional facility under section 1983," once the Court has conducted its sua sponte
10 screening pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1915(e)(2) and § 1915A(b), and thus, has made a
11 preliminary determination based on the face on the pleading alone that Plaintiff has a
12 "reasonable opportunity to prevail on the merits," the defendant is required to respond).

13 7. Plaintiff must serve upon the Defendants or, if appearance has been entered
14 by counsel, upon Defendants' counsel, a copy of every further pleading or other document
15 submitted for consideration by the Court. Plaintiff must include with the original paper to
16 be filed with the Clerk of the Court, a certificate stating the manner in which a true and
17 correct copy of the document was served on the Defendants, or counsel for Defendants,
18 and the date of that service. Any paper received by the Court which has not been properly
19 filed with the Clerk, or which fails to include a Certificate of Service, may be disregarded.

20 Dated: February 23, 2016

21 
22 Hon. Roger T. Benitez
23 United States District Judge
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